

NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER/SOLDIER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION BRINGS OUT THE “BEST OF THE BEST”



BY COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
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The Noncommissioned Officer/Soldier of the Year Competition was recently conducted at Fort Lee, Virginia. This week-long event tested the “Best of the Best” on numerous warrior skills such as reflexive fire, room clearing, combative and urban orienteering as well as other challenges. These outstanding Soldiers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were also tested on the grueling capstone (a series of undisclosed “mystery” events) on the last day of the competition. These exercises not only challenged their tactical proficiency but their intestinal fortitude as well.

The competition focused on three major areas: Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills (WTBDs), Army Values, and Warrior Ethos. The efforts of these outstanding Soldiers and NCOs reflects countless hours of training and preparation. Each represented their commands in a very honorable and professional manner.

Commanders are tailoring their training strategies to meet the challenges of the contemporary operational environment. Feedback from the Noncommissioned Officer Academy student population suggests that some units are still in the early implementation phases of the WTBDs. They are moving forward, but slowly. WTBDs were designed to replace common task testing (CTT) and reflect the latest doctrinal changes that support the global war on terrorism. There are numerous things that can hinder progress for WTBD implementation. Modification table of organization and equipment and lack of resources (not being able

to buy it) are the two major culprits. Units have to select which WTBDs to train based on command guidance, unit resources, and mission. One common mistake that tends to slow down the process involves confusion in trying to resource and augment current CTT training with WTBDs. It usually ends up with busy and sometimes unrealistic training guidance – the well known 125-pound rucksack.

SGT Corey Luffler, U.S. Army-Eighth, is the acting squad leader and prepares his colleagues to move out to the next scenario during the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills event during the 2006 NCO/SOY “Best Warrior” Competition at Fort Lee, Virginia.



PHOTO BY MIKE STRASSER, FORT LEE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



**SPC John Emmett (Left)
and
SFC Jason Alexander
were named 2006 Soldier
and Noncommissioned
Officer of the Year winners.**

WTBDs originated. WTBDs are now tested yearly, covering the latest message disseminated throughout the Army directing leaders to replace CTT with WTBDs.

All Soldiers, regardless of their military occupational skill, are expected to fight. Mastering the WTBDs will greatly enhance their survivability.

The following links will provide you with additional information on the WTBDs. <http://www-tradoc.army.mil/pao/trainingcloseup/020105.htm> and <http://www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-2929252274869.php>.

Streamlining resources, task prioritization, and a sound training strategy will speed up the transition and implementation process. The rucksack might still be heavy at the end, but at least it won't be bursting at the seams.

WTBDs lay the foundation for Soldier training and explains the why and how the



A Soldier concentrates on her push-up form during the Army Physical Fitness Test as part of the Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition.

Photo by Jorge Gomez, Fort Lee Public Affairs Office.

CSM Jose L. Silva is the 8th Regimental Command Sergeant Major for the Quartermaster Corps. He deployed to Uzbekistan for Operation Enduring Freedom as the 507th Logistics Task Force CSM and also served as the first Camp Sergeant Major for Camp Stronghold Freedom in Karshi-Khanabad. His responsibilities took him to Bagram, Mazare-Shariff, and Kabul. Then as the CSM for the 10th Division Support Command, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York, he redeployed to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom IV to serve as the Joint Logistics Center CSM before coming to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School, Fort Lee, Virginia. CSM Silva enlisted in the Army in July 1982 as an 11B (Infantryman) in the 82d Airborne Division. He became a Petroleum Supply Specialist in July 1986.